

NOTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
PLANNERS STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

Friday, September 20, 2002
MAG Office Building, Suite 200 Saguaro Room
302 North First Avenue, Phoenix

MEMBERS PRESENT

Wahid Alam, City of Mesa
Britt Dveris, SRPMIC
Paul Ferris, City of Eloy
Joy Mee, Phoenix
Bob Pazera, Town of Gilbert

Hank Pluster, Chandler
Ed Stillings, FHWA
Terrollene Charley, SRPMIC
Phil Testa, Surprise

OTHERS PRESENT

Michelle Green, MAG

Jack Tomasik, MAG

1. Regional Development Update

Jack Tomasik, presented saying it looks like MAG may obtain a detailed county-level economic/demographic model for alternative growth scenarios and impact analyses. We are looking at the model by Regional Economic Models, Inc., which is used by many governments across the nation. This may be approved for purchase by the Regional Council at its meeting this month. Management committee approved on the consent agenda at their meeting this month. We would obtain a two-county model that includes Maricopa and Pinal counties.

Another item that was raised is the Enhanced Notification Procedure that was adopted in 1991. This procedure sets out certain criteria for a project that would trigger a review by MAG and adjacent jurisdictions that could possibly be affected by the project. With staff turnover at MAG and member agencies, it seems that the Enhanced Notification Procedure has been fallen by the way side – at least MAG is not receiving notification from any member agencies except Surprise and Phoenix. Jack noted that this adopted procedure exists, and requested that it be followed. A copy of the procedure is attached for reference by all member agencies planning staff.

Mr. Tomasik then noted that this advisory group could be stronger if member agency planners and economic developers were combined. He asked how those in attendance would feel if economic developers were added to the Planners Stakeholders Group. There was no objection to that idea.

2. Possible Direction for MAG Regional Development

In October, Regional Council will be discussing impact analysis of significant development projects by MAG. There seems to be two realistic options. One is to prepare a regional impact analysis for what would be considered developments of regional significance; the analysis would not be presented in a formal written report unless asked for by the member agency. The other option is to prepare an annual report on the region that would compare it to other metro areas and also show changes that have occurred within metro Phoenix.

3. Presentation of Economic Development in Metro Phoenix

Jack Tomasik gave a brief overview of his background explaining that he has a 5 years experience in economic development strategic planning. He also explained that MAG is currently working with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) and is participating in developing the State Economic Study that is being prepared by the Arizona Department of Commerce. The goal of the state is that these two strategies can be aligned with one another. The objective of MAG and GPEC is to consolidate information about economic development for communities for twin goals: (1) possible alignment of community strategies with the regional economic strategy, and (2) providing site factor and economic information for communities that can be used in economic development marketing. Mr. Tomasik explained that he worked with the economic development staff from MAG member agencies that are also GPEC members. He noted that smaller member agencies do not have dedicated economic development staff, and MAG could be of assistance to these member agencies if invited.

Mr. Tomasik then began a presentation on the Economic Change and Economic Development Report, which is one of the papers being prepared under the Growing Smarter Implementation Project. A copy of this presentation is attached.

Questions/Comments

Is the GPEC looking at a plan to bring legislation forward?

The Business Leadership Coalition, which includes other business-related associations including GPEC is looking at the tax and fiscal policy here in Arizona. A major problem is the business personal property tax, which is twice the rate of residential personal property. This tax is a major deterrent to business locating here, as metro Phoenix is often eliminated from consideration in a first site selection screen based on secondary information. Funding for K-12 and higher education, and for transportation are also major fiscal issues for the economic development community. Mr. Tomasik indicated that all these issues are state, not local or regional.

What about affordable housing and sustainable development patterns? Are these issues being considered in the economic analysis?

We could analyze commute sheds around job centers and identify the appropriate mix of housing that matches the salary range of occupations likely to work in commute sheds. If each commute shed had that mix of housing, cross-region work trips could be minimized.

Doesn't the employer follow the workforce? If that is the case wouldn't the workforce gravitate towards housing it can afford? You should look at the Hits and Misses Report put out by the Morrison Institute.

Absolutely, workforce is more important to employers than ever. However, they look at 15- and 30-minute commute sheds, which don't necessarily eliminate cross-region work trips. Land use planning that minimizes travel would have a better mix of housing within commute sheds. We don't necessarily have that now, especially for low-wage occupations such as those needed, for example, by resorts.

4. Regional Transportation Plan Discussion

The group discussed the presentation on September 18 of the urban growth scenarios study, which is one study that is part of the regional transportation plan.

5. Next Meeting

The next Planners Stakeholders Group meeting will be held on November 1, 2002 at 1:00 p.m.